



# Choral Scholars Application Pack

## Welcome

Canterbury Cathedral is delighted to provide opportunities for outstanding early-career singers to contribute to the exciting and high-level musical life of the Cathedral and to develop their musical talents and career ambitions.

The Choral Scholars will sing at all services and events with the Cathedral Choir and in addition will offer around 7 hours per week of work to the Cathedral in further musical performance, outreach, and music administration. In 2025-26 the Cathedral is looking to appoint alto, tenor, and bass Choral Scholars. The Scholarship is a career development role and is therefore limited to 11 months from September 2025- July 2026.

In return the Scholars are offered accommodation in the historic Cathedral precincts, fully-funded singing lessons, a bespoke career mentorship scheme, and the opportunity to develop their talents and CV through a range of creative projects appropriate to their skills and interests. The value of the scholarship is £9,902.31 paid over 11 months.

Canterbury Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Mother Church of the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion. Founded by St Augustine, following his mission to England in 597 AD, and the scene of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket in 1170, the Cathedral draws a large regular local congregation, together with thousands of pilgrims and many high-profile visitors every year.

The Chapter has now prepared a Strategic Plan for the next ten years ([canterbury-cathedral-strategic-plan-2025-2035-a4-landscape-jan25.pdf](#)).

Canterbury has excellent transport links, including a fast train service to London (55mins into London St Pancras), making it an ideal place to develop a musical career at the highest level. It is also a lively university city with many shops, bars, restaurants, and a busy social and cultural life.



## Music at Canterbury Cathedral

The Cathedral is blessed with a large and flourishing Music Department under the leadership of Dr David Newsholme, Director of Music. Choral Evensong is sung regularly and a Choral Eucharist is celebrated on Sundays. The Cathedral has a popular online presence: professional-standard webcasting technology is in place, allowing our music to reach a very large audience around the world.

A broad range of musical activities takes place both at the Cathedral and further afield. In recent years, the Choir has recorded for Decca Records, Signum Classics, Resonus Classics, and BBC Music Magazine. The Choir has performed with world-class ensembles including His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, Fretwork, and The English Concert, and enjoys an ongoing relationship with period instrument orchestra The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen, alongside which the girl choristers recently took part in a recording of previously unrecorded music by Pepusch, which has been widely acclaimed and was selected as an Editor's Choice in the January 2024 edition of Gramophone Magazine.

The Choir is made up of up to 25 boys (7-13 years old) and up to 25 girls (12-18 years old) who attend a range of local schools. Both of these groups sing alongside 12 professional adult singers, a mixture of Lay Clerks and Choral Scholars, who provide the lower voices in the Cathedral Choir.

Canterbury Cathedral's Choral Scholar scheme launched in February 2021 as a professional development opportunity for early-career singers. Now in its fourth year, the scheme has succeeded in bringing talented individuals to Canterbury and affording them the opportunity to flourish here; it has also helped the Cathedral foster stronger links with conservatoires and other significant musical institutions nationally.



## Your Duties

### Singing with the Cathedral Choir

Monday	5.30pm Evensong – Full Choir
Tuesday	5.30pm Evensong – Full Choir
Wednesday	5.30pm Evensong – Full Choir
Friday	5.30pm Evensong – Lay Clerks & Scholars
Saturday	5.30pm Evensong – Full Choir
Sunday	11.00am Choral Eucharist – Full Choir 5.30pm Evensong – Full Choir

Each service is preceded by a rehearsal which you are required to attend. You would also sing at other events, rehearsals, and special services as required (see below for detailed information about hours).

### Absences

We are keen for you to make the most of professional opportunities that come up to develop your solo and choral career beyond the Cathedral, and we also understand the need on occasion to be absent for personal reasons. Requests for absence should be made to the Director of Music at the earliest possible opportunity (at the very least, one week's notice), and are allowed only at his discretion.

A deduction based on your hourly rate will be made in the case of an absence in order to assist the Cathedral in funding a Deputy (arranged by the Cathedral) to take your place.

### Other Duties

In addition to the singing commitments detailed above, and to your own private preparation time for this (which is not included in your hours), you will offer around 7 hours per week of work to the Cathedral. This will include occasional further solo or Choral Scholar ensemble performance (as appropriate), musical outreach work, and administrative support to the Cathedral music team.

We will work with you to allocate these hours at times that are most effective for you and for us, but choral commitments and working these hours must take priority over other engagements, except by permission of the Director of Music. You may take on additional voluntary or paid work during the period of your Scholarship as long as this does not conflict with your duties here.

You will also attend singing lessons and meetings with your mentor and with Cathedral staff as directed by the Director of Music. The Cathedral will fund the cost of singing tuition.



# What does Canterbury Cathedral Offer you?

## **Scholarship value**

The value of this scholarship is £9,902.31 (paid over 11 months - September 2025 to July 2026)

## **Accommodation**

Accommodation (a shared house) is provided within the Cathedral Precincts. This accommodation is rent and rate free as the nature of the post requires that the incumbent resides within the Precincts for the better performance of their duties. The cost of utility bills and cleaning charges are also included. This benefit is currently exempt from PAYE tax and NI.

## **Singing Lessons**

The Cathedral will organise and fund regular singing lessons for you during your scholarship. These are to be taken with a singing teacher appointed by the Director of Music. In exceptional cases it may be possible for you to make use of an external teacher instead. If you wish to do this it must be discussed with the Director of Music at the earliest opportunity.

## **Professional Development**

While resident at the Cathedral, we encourage you to take up the many opportunities to be creative that this environment offers. This could include (at the discretion of the Director of Music) creating solo performance opportunities both sacred and secular, gaining directing experience with the Choral Scholars' ensemble, developing a teaching practice, or undertaking a placement in an institution relevant to your career plans. We will seek to support you as much as we are able to make the most of these opportunities.





## Key Responsibilities of the Post

To sing at services, events, and rehearsals, always maintaining consistently excellent musical standards, as appropriate to current level of training, in both choral and solo singing.

To behave at all times in a way that facilitates the worship of the congregation, and respects the sanctity and prayerfulness of the Cathedral environment.

To participate fully in professional development opportunities provided by the Cathedral, including the mentorship scheme, and singing tuition.

To participate in further singing opportunities and the administration and outreach work of the Music and Liturgy Department as directed by the Director of Music.

As an employee of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral, to fully endorse, understand and exercise the roles and responsibilities contained within the Chapter's Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies which are set out in the Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct.

The post holder may be required to undertake any other reasonable task as requested by the Director of Music.

# Person Specification

The person specification below indicates the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills required to undertake the role effectively.

## Essential Skills and Experience

- Experience of singing in a choral/ensemble setting.
- Ability to read music to a high level of competence.
- Excellent vocal ability and musicianship, demonstrating potential for development.
- An understanding of, and sympathy with, the aims and purposes of the Cathedral, its worship, mission and ministry.
- Applicants must have the right to work in the UK.

## Desirable Skills and Experience

- Graduate status or equivalent experience.
- Formal singing qualification.
- Experience in singing sacred choral music.
- Experience in or aptitude for musical outreach work.

## Personal Attributes

- Organised and self-disciplined.
- A professional approach to work and relationships with colleagues.
- Reliable and punctual.
- Ability to work cooperatively with others.
- Commitment to personal professional development.
- Openness to musical direction and constructive musical feedback.
- Commitment to thorough private preparation and singing to the best of one's ability in every rehearsal and performance.
- Confident in performance.
- A flexible approach to hours worked.



# Terms and Conditions

**Job Title:** Choral Scholar

**Duration:** 1 September 2025 – 31 July 2026

**Reporting to:** Director of Music

**Location:** Canterbury Cathedral Precincts (CT1)

## Right to work

Applicants must have the right to work in the UK

## Scholarship Value

£9,902.31 paid over 11 months (September 2025 - July 2026)

## Probation period

During the probationary period of 3 months, either party may terminate this agreement by giving one weeks' notice in writing

## Working hours

You will be contracted to work for 811 hours (September 2025-July 2026), inclusive of your holiday allowance, and therefore Choral Scholars must be available to work for 709 hours (September 2025-July 2026). The basic working week will be approximately 10 hours of singing with the Cathedral Choir and 7 hours of other musical, outreach, and administrative duties.

Also included within your working hours is the requirement to:

- Work on public holidays which fall within your usual working hours.
- Work on major Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.
- Attend professional vocal training and meetings as specified by the Director of Music.
- Sing at other Cathedral services, events (e.g. concerts and recording sessions) and rehearsals which fall within your contracted hours as notified to you by the Director of Music.

In addition to the core hours, a Choral Scholar must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the Choral Scholar's professional duties, including in particular private rehearsal and familiarisation of assigned music.

You should attend all rehearsals as required by the Director of Music, arriving in your place (with the voice fully warmed up and with the set music fully prepared) for the published start time of the rehearsal.

## Annual leave

Your paid holiday entitlement for 11 months is 102 hours. Your entitlement is calculated pro rata on the basis of 5 weeks' paid annual leave plus 8 public holidays. The post holder should take this leave during the following planned periods when they are not required to sing:

- 11 consecutive days after Christmas.
- 12 consecutive days after Easter (including one weekend), except on the rare occasions when Easter falls very late, when the holiday will be split before Palm Sunday and after Easter Day.
- The choir holiday period beginning in mid-July.
- Half-term breaks in each term.

Specific dates for 2025-2026 are available on request.

## Safeguarding

A satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post.

## Pension

The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury offer a Stakeholder pension to all employees via Aviva. Your age and salary will determine if you are to be automatically enrolled in to the pension scheme. An employer's contribution will be made by the Dean and Chapter after 3 months' continuous service. Staff have the right to opt out of the scheme if they do not wish to be a member.



## Equality Statement

The Dean and Chapter recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## Other Terms and Conditions

The details above are only a summary of the terms and conditions offered and does not replace the wording of the Terms and Conditions which will form the contract between the post holder and the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

## Application Process

A full CV and covering letter should be submitted online via the Canterbury Cathedral website.

Application details can be found at [www.canterbury-cathedral.org/work-with-us](http://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/work-with-us)

You should also upload a digital file of you singing a piece of your choice (maximum 5 minutes) as a YouTube video. This can be published as 'unlisted' if you wish. You must provide a link to your video on your application. If you wish to have an informal conversation about the role of Choral Scholar or to ask questions in advance of application, please contact the Director of Music, David Newsholme, by email: [music@canterbury-cathedral.org](mailto:music@canterbury-cathedral.org)

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **Sunday 6 April 2025**.

Interviews are expected to take place on **Tuesday 15 April 2025**.

